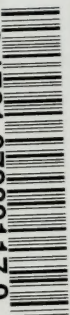


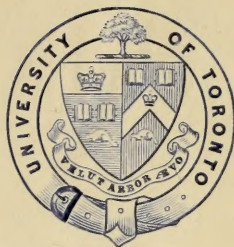
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JAPAN AND AMERICA

JAPAN AND AMERICA

The Japanese poet, Yone Noguchi, is already well known to many Americans, and his coming to America for a lecture tour will be of great interest to the lovers of poetry and literature. It was Lafcadio Hearn who first brought Japan into close relations with the West, not in any political sense, but in the realm of the artistic. Hearn went to Japan and became a real mediator, and what he did was not without its results. To-day another ambassador of the arts—Yone Noguchi—stands between and brings again into closer touch the contending civilizations of the East and the West. However, Mrs. Hearn used "the English words to serve Japanese poetry," and Hearn tried to interpret Japan by stuffing himself in her life. The fact that Mr. Noguchi writes English verse with ease and feeling is remarkable, for one does not expect to find a poet of the Far East, where all the traditions are different from those of the West, writing English with facility, but perhaps the East is not so "far" after all, for a poet is of no nation, but of all the world.

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In 1897 the youthful poet was seized with a desire to tramp, and he made a journey on foot to the Yosemite, whose natural beauties impressed him deeply. The following year he walked through parts

of Southern California and of this he writes, "I thank the rain, the most gentle rain of the Californian May, that drove me into a barn at San Miguel for two days and made me study 'Hamlet' line after line; whatever I know about it to-day is from my reading in that haystack."

In 1903 Noguchi crossed America and went to London, where he lived in obscurity until he published a little sixteen-page pamphlet, bound in brown paper, entitled "From the Eastern Sea," which brought him immediately to the notice of England's foremost literary men. The genius of the Japanese poet was recognised by such men as Austin Dobson, George Meredith, Thomas Hardy, and Andrew Lang, the latter writing that the poems "appear to me to contain many charming things, and to show a remarkable command of our language." The next year Noguchi returned to his native land after an absence of eleven years, again visiting England in 1913, when he lectured on Japanese poetry at Magdalen College, Oxford.

In the years following, Noguchi published several volumes of poetry and prose, "The Summer Cloud,"

"The Pilgrimage," "The American Diary of a Japanese Girl," "Lafcadio Hearn in Japan," "Through the Torii," "The Spirit of Japanese Poetry," and "The Spirit of Japanese Art," as well as many books in Japanese.

Noguchi's poetry possesses an elusive charm, a musical lilt, found in the work of few living poets. It suggests colour and moonlight, the sighing of breezes and the singing of birds; his feeling is delicate and fairylike, and his later works all portray an increasing love for his adopted language which he handles as no other non-English poet save Tagore has done.—The circular issued by the J. B. Pond Lyceum Bureau, New York, 1919.

Other Books by Yone Noguchi

Seen and Unseen. Orientalia, New York.

The Voice of the Valley. Out of Print.

From the Eastern Sea. Elkin Mathews, London.

The Pilgrimage. Elkin Mathews, London.

Lafcadio Hearn in Japan. Elkin Mathews,
London.

The Spirit of Japanese Poetry. John Murray,
London.

The Spirit of Japanese Art. John Murray,
London.

Through the Torii. Elkin Mathews, London.

The Story of Yone Noguchi. Chatto and
Windus, London.

Japanese Hokkus. The Four Seas Company, Boston.

Hiroshige. Orientalia, New York.

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JAPAN AND AMERICA

By

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UNIVERSITY



TOKYO
KEIO UNIVERSITY PRESS

NEW YORK
ORIENTALIA
1921

63/10
17/6/21

125
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25
415N/6

PRINTED IN JAPAN

NOTE

"Japan To-day," "Literary Co-operation between America and Japan," and "Japanese Poets and Poetry," are my lectures which I delivered at various universities and clubs of America in 1919-1920. With the view that the real understanding between America and Japan is momentous to-day when wild misinformations overrun freely, this book is published. But when my words displease you sometimes, that is, I dare say, because I value candidness of opinion more than anything else.

My acknowledgments are due to the editors of the Outlook and the Bookman, New York, for permission to reprint "Japanese Poets and Poetry" and "To the Americans," which have appeared in their pages.

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JAPAN AND AMERICA

JAPAN TO-DAY

Politics in Japan was neither corrupted nor enlightened in the Western sense, because, till a few years ago at least, politics and the actual life of Japanese people existed often separately, or the former aimed sometimes to patronise the latter. We have heard the Western charge of our being paradoxical, saying that the Constitution walked side by side in Japan with the "grim-faced sombre ghost of the bureaucracy"; although I do not know whether the so-called Japanese bureaucracy was grim-faced or not, I cannot help expressing, however, a few words of gratitude toward it, because it taught us, not only in politics but also in any other phase of life, how to keep our interest cumulatively, not momentarily. I am happy to say that we

had that bureaucracy when there was necessity for us to have it. But I am not, please remember me, glorifying it wilfully by any means. And I am glad to say that the Japanese bureaucracy, if we have it, is dying away in this intellectual age which we are now building up in Japan.

It is true that we lived till quite recently, under a social system in which freedom in private life and silent meekness in public made us a strangely paradoxical nation, and even the modern education did not help us much to develop our power of criticism. But we know that the education of Japan or any other country would be a failure till we are learned the important art of reflection. We admit that our civilisation, if we have it, is not an ethical civilisation, but we might say for lack of a better word an instinctive civilisation in which we fly in the air or swim in the water rather than walk naturally on the

solid ground. Its emotional elements are stimulative and audacious, but sometimes foolish and even selfish. Already a few years before the war many men began to see this national weakness, and inquire why we had lost our inner solidarity. From somewhat cynical attitude, they even looked back longingly toward the period of spiritual insularity of many hundred years ago, when our ruling class observed the old homogeneous ethics to their advantage. The Western civilisation, generally speaking, intoxicated our Japanese mind like strong drink; and as a matter of course we often found ourselves, when we awoke from that intoxication, sadder and inclined even to despise ourselves. That was the spiritual condition of Japan in the pre-war time.

The Western civilisation whose political object, at least, was gain but not growth, always scientific but not particularly human,

worked, in fact, to deprive us of our original simplicity which was the very fountain-head of idealism; forgetting the true sense of morality, we were often placed, in spite of ourselves, in danger of being broken into material fragments. When we lost our spiritual concentration, how could we remind ourselves of our human past. We then unconsciously stood making ourselves as a barrier choking the stream running from the ancient foliage of simplicity. What we had been taught by the Western country or countries? They have taught us often to be extravagant but not magnanimous, to be talkative but not particularly wise; to be wide but not deep. Japan of the pre-war time was dangerous more than interesting; the phenomena of such a weakness, was, just as in any other country, more clearly expressed in politics than in anything else. We had still to create a healthy middle class for

guiding the politics aright and setting the general standards of aspiration ; the upper class, even when it was not degenerated, was always narrow-minded, and the lower class was busy with its own existence. It was only natural at such a state of the country that our politics thought it safe, even wise, to follow after the bureaucracy, whether it be an armour-clad *samurai* or a Nietzsche's super-man. Even the Japanese bureaucracy (in fact, it was the best bureaucracy ever existed since it felt such a responsibility toward its people) could not be different from any other bureaucracy who used its own magnetic power to check a real course of culture. But what a political change is working in Japan since the war !

In a country where no real meaning of politics is understood, and individual opinion is too shy to express itself, no real idealism, political or otherwise, would be realised,

We have many examples to prove it. Even a man like Marquis Okuma, when he stepped into office some years ago, could not help following after a programme written by the bureaucracy, and rubbing away his distinguished political history in which his failure was, paradoxical though it may sound, a success individually unparalleled in modern Japanese annals. And again, on the other hand, his opposing party, whatever it was, opposed him perhaps from its own desire of opposing for opposition's sake. Then as a matter of course the dissolution of the House of Commons ensued as a piece of political farce. But I would like to know where in the world is a dissolution with the real meaning. It is not my concern here to discuss the details of Japanese political parties; but what I can say off-hand is that the political struggle of Japan, at least, till a few years ago, was not one, let me say, for principle or

idealism, but it was often personal.

When nobody seemed able to think of politics apart from personal interests, it was natural that our constitutional government became a prey of the bureaucracy, or only served to make the bureaucracy look powerful. At such a dangerous time of national crisis, the European war broke out; and we had soon cast our own lot with the Allies against Germany. It was indeed a Heaven-sent opportunity when the country could make herself regain her own concentration of mind that she has lost. Is there anything like war that makes our minds sober, even rigid at once, and makes us forget of life's selfish desire? When we thought that there should be some way to rescue the country from the corruption, politically, morally or otherwise, we were certainly ready to take the severest form of remedy in war.

But our desire was far from the survival of

the nationalism of the olden age, since the central strength of the old nationalism was sought in blind faith, more or less materialistic; what we wanted to build was the nationalism in the truer and newer meaning, that should start from the respect of other countries but not from the hatred of them, from the real knowledge of our own weakness but not from the foolish trust of our own selves. The former nationalism of ours, as in fact, was only little more than self-glorification; but the desire of the nationalism which awakened with the war had rooted in the very realisation of country's real strength, or more true to say, real weakness, in the face of the world. We endorsed and backed unanimously Marquis Okuma, then the Premier, who declared the war, because it was not only a war with Germany, but a great war against ourselves. Even when we won battles against Russia some years ago, we did not feel as

with this European war, I am sure, such an overwhelming feeling that even our country of the Far East was one of the great members of the nations who made the whole world go round. I mean that we had felt nearly equal responsibility for the war in which we were not concerned originally; again let me say that our country too felt the almost same pulse of pain from the war which raged far away in the West. To put aside the question of international politics, the economic question which had an immediate response in the daily life was so serious; indeed, our country felt simultaneously with the belligerent countries themselves a sudden financial crisis. Our daily Japanese life had been threatened and terrified by such a leap of prices for everything of immediate necessity; and to-day when the war is over, we hardly know how to accommodate ourselves to the painful situation wherein we had entered.

I confess that we Japanese had been looking upon Germany with curiosity for many years, that was, for one reason, from a sort of sympathetic admiration of her national attempt to overtake what she had lost by her delay in arriving as a world power; we had felt even encouraged and instigated by a living object lesson in Germany. (In this respect, a still greater service, I believe, was rendered to us by America.) The consolidation of the German Empire had helped, I think, to confirm us in our belief in the Bureaucracy or Militarism which had plainly endorsed our Shintoism in the point of hero-worship; when Japan, internationally young and undeveloped in a thousand ways, had thought that scientific study should be put before the culture of personality, we had sent many hundred students to Germany, officially or otherwise. Although many of them had simply returned after learning how to drink

beer or dance a waltz, they had also helped to popularise the admiration of Germany in Japan. I think it was quite natural that an outspoken German sympathy had been well established in many quarters, even when we had been fighting with Germany as a belligerent, and even while the Anglo-Japanese treaty had tied us down to the puritanic morality of the English civilisation that was highly ethical, aiming at the culture of personality.

Japan who had been shut up too long in an atmosphere where the Eastern progress of Oriental civilisation had reached its final stop, had one day of a half century ago awakened to the way by which a different, a far more brilliant, civilisation could be freely absorbed; and her prominent characteristics of adaptability (some Western critic calls it by the prosaic name of imitativeness) natural to mixed blood like hers, had expressed its

own versatility. Our insatiable curiosity toward the Western civilisation, at least in the past years, was something like that of a child or savage whose desire was suddenly opened to the luxuries. Again like the child or the savage, we had placed in danger to lose in this new adventure our own sense of morality that we had created with the patience of a thousand years of insular life. It is true that we had been asking for some time whether we should go to the German civilisation whose eyes had been set on life's contest, or to the English civilisation whose main aim was the cultivation of personality. Our wild instinct, I believe, had preferred the German civilisation, while our sense of justice the English civilisation. But the cruel action of Germany in starting of the war most shabbily exposed her absolute lack in ethics and reflective morality; and not only from the point of the Anglo-Japanese treaty, but also

from the sense of justice, we joined the Allies.

In truth, the German civilisation was without sympathy; certainly it was the most bewildering problem, because it could never harmonise, by the communication of soul, with the other civilisations of the world. To have one civilisation, if it was really good and true, should mean to possess all the other civilisations; but the German civilisation, from lack of reflection, thought of itself too proudly and shut itself into its own egotistic castle. As a result of its defying the other civilisations, it had had to fall back on itself for its maintenance; then from the passion of impatience or madness it had only one way that was to tear itself to pieces. And on the other hand, the civilisation of the English people well backed by the Americans, was not accidental; its development deliberately followed step after step the movement of true freedom, born in the very bosom of con-

servatism. It is free, therefore it is clean, like a pure water cleaning our hearts. It is ethical, therefore it is kind, like earth gladdening our minds. The most prominent quality of the civilisation of English-speaking people is sympathy, wisely regulated by their own sense of practicability; the real consciousness in their minds rarely lets them miss their perspectives, spiritual or otherwise. As they always search for unity or harmony with the outside heterogeneous complexity by their inner wisdom, they are blessed by love or peace. The war was fought between morality and energy, again between common-sense and wild dream.

As we carelessly thought, the war did not come so soon to its termination; but when year after year had passed under the darkness terribly darkened by human bloods, and our suffering, spiritual and physical, did not know how to be relieved, we became to be-

lieve more firm that the contest will be won, as we already saw in fact, by the party whose moral conception was strong enough to conform with the cosmic law, sacrificing everything for strengthening of the true self. It was idle to discuss which party, the Allied Forces or the German, will become the final winner. How true it is that nothing noble can be achieved except by suffering pain. The higher becomes the development of the human mind the greater the pain which must be faced. The cultivation of the power to suffer is perhaps the universal law. When had the Allied Forces ever refused to obey it? Therefore we won the war.

When we happened to have a moment even of doubt of our own strength as one of the Allied Forces, our real optimism, not as theory or principle but as a living force, had established with the pain of suffering and endurance. For Japan, as much as for the

other Allied Nations, the war had served as a divine fire, under whose destroying power we had resurrected in a far truer birth. The war is a touchstone to test our worth. Who among the Allied Nations is not thankful for the war? I certainly believe that Japan had become, since the war, ten - times truer, stronger and more honest. How much we learned from the war!

There was a time in Japan, not long ago, when we treated patriotism as a kind of seven-headed Fetish whose command, wise or unwise, reasonable or unreasonable, true or untrue, we had only to obey in blind unquestioning silence; it was often a brutish thing which we followed not with an intelligent initiation of mind but with mysterious fear. General immobility of thought, the great absence of reflection and the unbroken silence of people's minds were thought to show the climax of patriotism; the absolute

losing of individuality in the country's aspiration, not asking and not knowing whither we were going or why, was our ideal. How often in our past history we proved ourselves possessors of such a patriotism. Many Japanese believed that Japanese alone were capable of the silent unquestioning sacrifice of life for the nation's destiny. But this blind faith of theirs, as I believe, had been cracked and shattered to sad disillusion now when we observed that the Western people also had been endowed with an unmistakable patriotic fire; the very fact that they interpreted patriotism as guarding the liberties or democratism of the country, that it was strongly inspired by their philosophic idea or life's principle, for the defence or propagation of which they had never been afraid to give their own selves, made us first wonder and stand amazed at their conduct, then admire and understand it. The greatest in-

fluence that the war had inflicted on us would have been the realisation of the immediate necessity of reconstructing the so-called Japanese patriotism.

Now we are pleased to understand the word patriotism not as a passive mechanical obedience but as the true entering into the very consecration with the thought of the nation. In olden days individual intellectuality was often thought to be a nuisance or at best the self-protection of cowardice; but to-day it is a vital force that, like a burning torch against the darkness, will lead the country into that organic harmony without which patriotism would be senseless as a dummy *samurai* made of feathers and metals. Not only the meaning of patriotism but the general reconstruction or rearrangement of the nation's mind is most imminent in Japan; I thank the war for speeding up this tendency.

To think of the spiritual condition of Japan

only ten years ago, in which the country was growing to be a sad specimen of debris or cheap fragments under the wild menace of a far superior Western civilisation, and in which we became, in spite of ourselves, a hopeless prey to the Western science and theories, is a most appalling subject; but to-day we have our full-hearted gratitude for the war, since it has served at once as an inspiration to complete the grand unity of the nation's soul. Of course such a striking phenomenon is not only the case of Japan. Look at England or France or America. The wise dictators of the Western countries certainly have used the war, the thing second best and acceptable if as in fact we could not avoid it, to advantage for creating a renaissance or unification of the country fit for a different condition and hope. How beautiful to see these Western nations in the perfect unity of their action and hope. Again how

beautiful to see that they are void of the small jealousies and quarrels which before the war divided them and weakened their purpose and aspiration. Indeed in the annals of the world it is the first time that the world, at least the half world, has completed the beautiful unification; I dare say that it is better to keep harmony in war than to be disjoined in peace.

But we cannot say that those who are wise and honest in managing the war will be equally honest and wise in their handling of peace. Since peace, perhaps like the war, again perhaps like music or poetry, is an art, the people or nations who treat it should obey its inmost voice, highly spontaneous and free. You must deal with peace not scientifically and not theoretically; only those who face it with passion and love have the right to command it. A peace cannot be made to order any more than a war can be fought to

order. Peace also is living and organic thing.

Indeed peace is a question of morality; it will never be won by any superiority of intellect. Who is he who is successful in peace? It is only he whose moral conscience is healthy and strong. Let me ask you again if we can be successful in peace as in the war. Japan as a nation has an immediate concern with America for this important question of peace; the peaceful attitude of these two countries will protect the safety of the half world at least. There is nothing more momentous at present than the co-operation of America and Japan. Putting aside the practical matter into the practical hands of men in an authoritative situation, I myself wish to advocate, first of all, the necessity of trust in each other's honesty; I do not know anything more harmful than suspicion. Let us thoroughly understand with one

another for this important work of solving the world's peace. And the real understanding would never be realised without a mutual respect.

We hear so often from America that the Oriental civilisation will become a menace toward the West. I do not know anything more absurd than that. Certainly that is a thought of the mind who has been deceived by a mirage or optical illusion of a thing which, in its truest sense, never existed. It is my opinion that the so-called dynamic civilisation of the West will be better harmonised by the Asiatic belief that is to be true to the principles of Nature and the benevolent exercise of them to others. We dare say that we Orientals have a few more ideas for the matter of peace than the Western people.

We Japanese had been studying the Western civilisation and its happy possibility

during more than fifty years, and are thinking that we discovered a meeting ground where the civilisations of the East and West revived in the truest spirit of friendship. Therefore in some sense, Japan, I mean "New Japan," is a creation of the West. And I believe that we are nothing if we don't bless the other Asiatic countries with this secret that we learned from the West, and help them to awake to the real meaning of life. It is Japan's mission that, while becoming an ambassador to the West, we will make ourselves an encourager and practical helper toward the other countries at home. Let us believe as peace-loving Orientals in Confucius' saying; "We should have no foregone conclusion, no arbitrary predetermination, no obstinacy, and no egoism." As I said before, peace is organic and living thing. Let us love peace with passion, not only with intellect. And I think that this is about the

time when the Western people should stop to talk about the bureaucracy of Japan, because it already died away. And if the bureaucracy still exists, it is merely an afterglow that will soon pass away.

Now to turn to literature. Let me tell you how the modern literature of Japan had been changing. Although it sounds strange, it is true that, while we cursed Russia and even called her barbarous when we fought with her, quite many years ago, we, at least the intellectual Japanese, on the other hand, burned incense right before Turgenieff, Tolstoy, and even Gorky? It was the time when we smuggled in Western individualism while singing aloud the most patriotic song ever there was. The war lessened the distance between Japan and Europe. The Western civilisation which we had only understood through the eyes of Oriental idealism became suddenly real, more from its own

weakness ; without the perception of the weakness the interesting part of Western civilisation would never be understood. And this weakness appeared beautiful, even grand, when the war made us see life naked, and its brutal exposure of reality broke down our old idealism. Politically Socialism then took root ; in literature the so-called naturalism, of course with Japanese modifications, grew imminent, driving out the old literature which always hid from us the real meaning of life under polite phraseology.

Since the Russia-Japan war, the old Japanese ethicists had had two objects—namely, to stamp out Socialism and “naturalism,” which, both of them, insisted on perfect individualism. It seems to me that they used every possible power toward their end ; many writers were supposed, in fact, to be as dangerous morally and socially as anarchists. The question was then : “Will the bad

literature be stamped out?" And another question was: "What is that bad literature?" I can say that the so-called bad literature only gained more strength as the reaction. And where was that "bad literature?" Although it did not conform to the old idea of patriotism and national morality, it was certainly not worse than any European literature. As I do not believe in the existence of the undangerous man, I am also sceptic about the dangerous man. I, on the same ground, do not know any good literature in the most puritanic sense.

It was open secret that the old moralists had been trying then to revive, but with no success, the old Chinese classics and the ancient ethics of filial piety. Many a book had been published under their auspices to bring the old thoughts and wisdom again to life. While I admit that such an attempt had not been altogether bad, though not wise,

I cannot help insisting that the new age should have the new literature. I saw no time when the old moralists and the literary mind in general, had so estranged as in those days; they had been fighting with their footholds at opposite extremes.

But one writer, like Flaubert, with something of the air of one of the Port-Royal solitaires, continued to be painfully fascinated by the excessive openness to sensation; again like Flaubert, another writer was to be fastidious with the scent, colour and atmospheres of each word fitting his special idea or emotion. Here a short-story writer who believed with De Maupassant in the "nervous phrase, substantial, clear, with strong muscles and browned skin," and in work "like that of God in the Universe, present everywhere and visible nowhere," and brutally shunned fine writing. And also there a writer, like Turgenieff's Rudin, who was delighted to be

allured to brilliant worlds to make a beautiful girl his own prey. But those writers who used Western knowledge to advantage or disadvantage were growing tired of their little selfish worlds, or becoming wisely conscious of their own foolishness of self-indulgent lives, when they were surprised by the proclamation of the European war. Certainly the time was changing.

With Japan's entry into the war, the social consciousness of not a few writers grew at once enlarged, and they began to take a responsible attitude toward life and the nation. It is a matter since the opening of the war that our literary atmosphere and colour has been purified and in some meaning, delivered, above all readjusted. As in any other nation, the word democracy and people's literature (as if saying the nation's war) soon became meaningful catch-words in Japan ; we are glad that we are sane enough not to make

individualism and the democratic spirit come into conflict, but to look upon them with all respect and recognition. Where there is no true individualism there will be no real democracy, just as you may say that there is no perfect obedience without a true sense of freedom. It was only natural that we turned our heads to Walt Whitman and read "Leaves of Grass" to be encouraged and strengthened in our own new belief. Those who were not vigorous and healthy enough to embrace the Good Grey Poet, went to Edward Carpenter, this poetical backwood man by deliberation and choice, and talked with him on the worth of a real life and the harmony of seemingly conflicting elements. Some people who are craving good-naturedly and even madly for a copious and close comradeship of men tried to introduce even the name of Horace Traubel.

And what books young Japan is reading

to-day? Perhaps "Capital" by Karl Marx or "The Morality of Woman" by Ellen Key. "Mutual Aid" and others of Peter Kropotkin's works have been translated into Japanese. The name of Bertram Russell became known here like that of H. G. Wells or Bernard Shaw.

When I think about this wonderful invasion of the Western democracy, I cannot help wondering about its relation with Shintoism or ancestor-worship. Certainly it is a serious problem. The essence of ancestor-worship should be, of course, in the very beauty of the personal communication with the spirits of the departed; their protection is transcendently divine, while it keeps, on the other hand, a human actuality. Ancestor-worship reveals its living power in our belief that the worldly aspect of the ancestral spirits, the invisible, will be kept as in their lives. But when faced to the modern democracy, the

problem will be more complicated, and it cannot help losing its own old dignity. There is unmistakable evidence of agitation in the general conception of Shintoism or ancestor-worship, in the Japanese minds of to-day, and one wonders how the belief in Shintoism, simple and archaic, can harmonise with modern thoughts. How the conception of ancestor-worship can keep its compactness against the changing conditions of our lives? Again how it will adjust and harmonise itself with the democratic theory that we Japanese too are going to adopt?

This simple mysticism of Japan, the faith in the dark shadow, is certainly going to be weakened by the democratic process of modern life. This plain atmosphere of a city, exciting and unpoetically scientific, does not tend to cherish the somewhat ghostly and shadowy sense of ancestor-worship. And of those who move to a foreign country—for instance, to

America—where there is more stress on the living communities than on those of the spirits, it is not too much to say that they will be glad to make a fresh start in life by forgetting the past ages and departed spirits. Furthermore, the main families in the old patriarchal system are already dying out in present Japan, and a branch family can not be expected to be so devotional to the thought of the ancestors. I do not know how the spiritual insularity which once had been broken can be mended again. Not only Shintoism, like the Japanese patriotism of old form, is bound to decay. Buddhism also, perhaps from the fault of the priests more than anything else, will be going to meet with the equal destiny. Its relation with the intellectual Japanese life had been for some time already slight.

There was a time, I mean in the earlier part of the Meiji era, about forty years ago,

when the intellectual minds went perfectly astray from every form of religion; but it seemed they were regaining afterward a general belief in religion, and its popularity was resuming its formal shape. How is it to-day? It has again lost its own place, particularly since the war. As the political change and sudden disturbance of Japanese life shattered the religious faith at the time of the Grand Restoration, so the science, the democratic theory, literature, and philosophy from the West, served to make the present faithless age from which we moderns do not even wish to escape. But who knows the time may not come before long, when we will criticise and even curse democracy as "mobocracy"! Perhaps we will be in future brought again into the age of hero-worship when we should listen to the romantic rhapsodies sung by a seer or prophet, a man with a wild eyes that will peep into vision. I can say with belief

that even democracy would never work well, if not guided by the inspired power of some grand leader. But in the meantime, let us be rejoiced in democracy, even from the impassioned sense of it.

LITERARY CO-OPERATION BETWEEN AMERICA AND JAPAN

The new country like America, as anybody knows, would give people many different opportunities of self-expression except language; the meaning that in any other country should be expressed by language, will be told in America perhaps in stone or steel; the fields of activity of the creative imagination are ten-times more various and rich in America than even the country like England. But think about the present American populations that are already twice more than those of the British Empire, and again about the possibility that they will grow trebled in due course of time; it would not be a wrong conclusion to say that the literary activity too will be enlarged proportionally with the amount of populations. Beside there is an

unmistakable fact that many brilliant literary brains of Europe sought material support during the war, and it resulted in making the literary soil of America enriched and far more invigorating. Anybody can see plainly now how much the European writers are depending at least materially on the American markets of literary distribution.

To have a large dominion, like England, with different peoples, and naturally with different thoughts and desire for expression, will surely threaten the independence of the language, and its purity should be always in danger; in fact there are more varieties of provincialism in the British Empire and her dominions than elsewhere. But America gives only little opportunity for the development of colloquialism or dialect, because, first of all, people there are such extensive travellers at home and abroad, and then their language is more or less arranged and unified

by the commendable education. Since the majorities of people, particularly at the Western states, are removers from different foreign countries, to whom the old tradition of English language and literature would be alien and meaningless; and their English language should be simple and free from any rhetorical ornamentation. It is nothing strange that the Western America gave birth to the new English poetry, that trampled down all the literary traditions, and established a native movement with its own flowing rhythm of a newer and living diction.

The English literature of England as well as America had been attempting for some time, consciously or unconsciously, to get a new force from somewhere, and while not wounding its pride, complete a sort of renaissance. But how could any reform or rejuvenation could be accomplished without risking of self-destruction? Till the war

began, its love of tradition and half-felt desire of change checked the way to doing any thing audacious and free ; but the war, with the most terrible cleansing fire, baptised the heavily-clothed minds of English speaking people. The literary insularity of English literature that had been always denying a French influence found itself splitting open ; and it had hardly any resisting power against the new literature that was born in the Western America, when it had invaded, perhaps with the American democracy, the old traditional castle of English literature.

Then where is the centre of this new American literature. In Chicago, perhaps. Chicago is, in fact, dictating to-day the American poetry, at least the poetry of America who looks upon an emancipation from a worn-out theory and what Carlyle called " old clothes." Chicago is not a town of natural growth but the most magical phenomenon of only sixty

years old, then it is quite natural that the new American literature that Chicago as the most busy centre of poetry is propagating, should be revolutionary but not evolutionary ; while evolution is apt to be compromising and genially optimistic, revolution whose heart is often consciously pessimistic, is sometimes troubled with incongruity of cynicism born out of its own overhasty conduct. This new American literature whose first period of some seven or eight years ago was to destroy or forget the old faith and general sentimentalism of literature, is now entering in its second period when it is enjoying, in spite of itself, even with a Rabelaisian glee, in the mental chaos of its own creation, and as refult, will begin even to despise itself.

Even we Japanese in far-away Japan have heard the strong-voiced proclamation of the new American literature of Chicago insisting, first of all, on life's naked realism even of

Edgar Lee Masters' fashion always fatalistic and often miraculous ; I know that it will be, in many meanings, a continuation of the literary work that Walt Whitman and Mark Twain started, joining hands with the joy and sorrow of people but not blindly submitting themselves to their command. Chicago is a human melting pot in the good or bad sense of the word ; she is interesting, even suggestive, because she is unfinished. Chicago is a town perhaps wicked, not puritanic and particularly sane, therefore her future is more varied in colour and temperament. Chicago is naked and artless, because she is honest and even strong. I can say with belief that, if the new literature of America gave, as in fact it gave, a finishing stroke to the vain elaboration of English literature or poetry encouraged in the Victorian age, the meaning of its own existence is certainly great ; it is, is it not, that that is at least one great occasion

in which America rendered a wonderful literary service to English literature or the literature of the world. From such an opinion I myself pay a high respect to the literary Chicago or perhaps to "Poetry: a Magazine of Verse" edited by Miss Monroe. But I know that there is still a margin for critical adventure as to what and how the future American literature will be; will the new literature of the Chicago school be permanent in the American letters of the future?

I think that by the time when the still further Western moving of literature (it had been steadily moving Westward in America) will cross over one of the greatest mountain ranges of the world and reach the Pacific Slope, the general spiritual poise of the American people should be heightened, and the well-nigh perfect maturity of their souls will be commanded, as the incongruity of their over-ambitious bloods with the environment

may have been settled and harmonised; the American people after twenty or thirty years, I am sure, will establish their own culture ten-times more strong and beautiful, in which their lyrical rhapsody well seasoned by a sense of retrospection will create a really true American literature. The so-called new literature of present America, through the nature of often unnatural realism or psychologicalness, always puts a stress on the matter of life; when it is explanatory, that would be result of its being too intellectual; and when it lacks sometimes in spiritual adventure again that would be the result of its being influenced too much by a city life. But I hope that the future American literature will be built on the true blending of life and nature, the life that soars out of the complexity of realism, the nature that reveals more strongly the inevitable changes of rhythmic vitality of the universe. When Chicago be-

came, as many people believe, an American factory of new literature or poetry from the reason that a human reality was far more intense and free than any other place, I cannot see why the Pacific Coast blessed with such a wonderful element of waters and mountains will not create a new literature perhaps matching well with the commercial activity of the Pacific Ocean.

When Joaquin Miller sung "Westward Ho!" with the following lines :

"A mighty nation moving west,
With all its steely sinews set
Against the living forests. Hear
The shouts, the shots of pioneer,
The rended forests, rolling wheels,
As if some half-checked army reels,
Recoils, redoubles, comes again,
Loud-sounding like a hurricane."

perhaps he did not think at the time of writing that he was also singing, in that piece,

about the mighty moving of American Literature toward the West, like the Western sweep of the sun, whose slow rhythmic stamping sound echoed in every corner of the continent. Indeed like the course of the splendid silent sun, the course of the civilisation and literature of the world is moving Westward from the East. And even in America only, the American civilisation and literature is slowly but steadily moving Westward ; and who will doubt that they are destined in time to reach the Pacific Coast where, to use Miller's words, the " brave young city of the Balboa seas " is working out her own life's mission ?

Boston, even Concord of Emerson or Thoreau, was the veritable hub of American literature little more than a half-century ago, where the so-called transcendentalists or others built a temple of parochialism under whose protection they attempted to create a

real condition of the soul's freedom, and vigorously asserted the dignity of American letters. Those wonderful believers in their town as an Athens were soon obliged to recognise a larger civilisation and literature beyond the town borders, and then found that the literary centre of America that, they thought, would be permanent with them, began moving south; when New York gained her commercial supremacy, the parochialism of American literature was already turning to the universalism.

Then the rapid development of the Western states commercially or otherwise, began to attract the sensitive mind of American literature, and encourage her Westward moving; although New York has never lost and will sustain for many years to come, her dignity as a centre of literary distribution, I mean that the American literature so novelty-loving, even fickle-minded, like the literature

of any other country, is always seeking an atmosphere intense and procreative, under whose blessing she can reveal herself striking, even frighteningly new. I was told that the Westward moving of American literature already reached in 1900 as far as Indianapolis; and who can doubt to-day that Chicago once only famous for hog-killing machines, now proud of the Chicago University and the city library and of course "Poetry: a Magazine of Verse," an oracle with many prophets and prophetesses rising from the middle-west, is dictating the American poetry.

And again who can doubt that the American literature will reach the Pacific Slope in due course of time. Then it is the time when the real literary co-operation between America and Japan will be acting.

The million miles of blue waves of the Pacific Ocean are guarded by those two awe-inspiring but kind mountains, awe-inspiring

like kings, kind like queens, Fuji Mountain in Japan and Mount Shasta in California, whose white-crowned heads reach the sky and exchange a salutation of voiceless words with God. While the Tokaido highway concentrates its natural beauty with Fuji Mountain as a centre, here the scenic wonder of California is begun with Mount Shasta, a northern guardian-tower, through which you can step in the richest bosoms of the valleys crawling like dragons. Behold the solitude of Mount Shasta silently scorning the forests below, by which Klamath River in north and Sacramento River in south run carrying her divine shape that is nothing but the deathless castle challenging against Eternity. She is the mountain of snow and light, a glorious pyramid outstanding beyond the seasons and age. And behold, turning your head to the other side, how the Yosemite Valley with El Captain, that monster of granite of three

thousand feet high, and with Marced River whose mirrow-white breast decorates itself with wonderful trees and flowers, is competing with Mount Shasta. Here are several waterfalls, as I once wrote, with the "tempestuous song of Heaven's organ throbbing wild peace through the sky and land"; there are cedars and sequoias sending out the sweetest odours to accentuate the rhythm of nature. Raise your head and see the bluest sky, and lower your head and give thanks for the earth whereon you stand.

But the future literature of America would not let the old way of interpretation of nature stay as it is, that often concerns her superficial hieroglyphics; she has been treated, as in the works of the New England poets of fifty years ago, as an accessory to human life or a background to human events; therefore she only served for poets as a sort of tool for sentimental indulgence. It is the attitude of

us Japanese toward nature that we, from a sense of the solidarity of the universe, seek first where is the true affinity between man and nature ; by passing out into nature or the non-human world, we can forget our belittling self-aggrandisement or egoism, and then our true place in the universe will be revealed. When a sense for particular aspects of nature, rather than a whole sense for nature herself, is prized, the relation of man to the rest of creation cannot be perfectly understood ; the examples to explain it abound in the old nature poems of America. What we Japanese think important is the true contemplation of nature, that is another way to say the true realisation of our own selves ; this literary attitude, perhaps, would invigorate the minds of American poets so that they can escape from emotional sentimentalism, and their interpretation of nature will become more essential. If it is true to say

that the opportunity of the Pacific Coast as the future centre of the commercial world hangs on how she will respond to and communicate with Asia, I do not see why she will, for the matter of literature, object to the Oriental influence. We dare say that we Orientals can contribute some new poetical strength to the Pacific Coast to make her a literary centre of America, when the opportunity smiles. The course of the sun is from the East to the West; the course of civilisation of the world has been moving Westward. And as in fact, the course of American literature also has been moving Westward, from the Atlantic Coast toward the Pacific Slope.

THE AMERICAN DEMOCRACY

My present American interest hangs on one point: What a real faith America entertains toward the Declaration of Independence, Abraham Lincoln and Walt Whitman, the thing and persons that, not only having been born in America, became an inner vision of the country, therefore a symbol of protest against the tendency of the age to leave its own original ideals, then a creator of the new life out of the past, at once momentous and enduring with the power of reflection striving for expression. (I will count the names of Emerson and Mark Twain too as real American products.) Of course now when it seems that the whole world talks about the American democracy from the point of exposition of the consciousness of life's meaning,

and recognising the strength of its self-confidence, how Whitman or Whitmanism stands in relation with America to-day would be a greater attraction for any mind of spiritual adventure.

It was Whitman that strongly asserted the true existence of America entering into a complex cosmopolitan community already developed in his time; but is it not true to say that the real meaning of existence of America to-day has been confused and even impaired? If such a view is right, the prophetic attitude that Whitman's poems backed by his personality expressed challengingly, will send out some more tragic colour; and then Whitman himself will certainly become more important as being not a mere literary phenomenon, but also as a symbol or prophet of real life. Although it is generally understood that the triumph of American democracy is singing through the wide world, the truth might be

that America herself is not so democratic as she is supposed to be from a distance. As a voice crying in the wilderness, Whitman will be then situated to raise more loudly his voice of protest.

Whitman sung the permanent idealism dynamically; his thoughts, being simple exteriorly, hold within themselves the highly procreative meaning that is also even intricate. Under the challenging surface, the still affirmation is to be recognised. While belonging to a special class of people, Whitman was proud to call himself one of the divine average; being a distinct and separate individuality, he was glad, at the same time, to be a member of the plain complete community whose emotions he respected. He was quite intellectual on one side; but on the other side, he was greatly emotional. In fact, with that power of emotion, he attempted to unify a mighty orchestra called the

American life. I wonder how far present America realises Whitman's ideals. Although it seems that the age entered in a time of realisation of Whitmanism under the name of democratic triumph, there is, on the other hand, some evidence to prove that the present tendency of America is moving reversely. Affirming Whitmanism by theory, America might be denying it by practice. Shortly, I should like to know, how far the right of the divine average is respected.

America, as it seems to me, has now entered into her fourth period, when her propagation of democracy through the world was justified as a second move to her voluntary connection with European or the world's politics; the first period when political freedom was recognised theoretically with the people as a basis, was soon followed by the second period, when the general suffrage was endorsed by material organisation and pros-

perity that had grown in astonishing fashion. And America attempted in her third period to harmonise politics with the people, education with humanity, and vitalise spiritual or religious idealism with fact,—and failed in her work. Now let me ask America if she thinks she will succeed in her fourth period into which she had boldly stepped. I myself am afraid that as she failed in her third period, she may be striving how to write a history of failure. It is the fact at least that the democracy Walt Whitman persisted in with such self-assertion has become sad fragments, and because those fragments of democracy were scattered on the world without discrimination, Whitman's democracy became thin and diluted in its own meaning. Not only in America but in any other country of the world, it seems that the word democracy is often understood materialistically and its spiritual meaning is quite neglected in

practice; while I admit that Whitmanism, generally speaking, is assured through the world, I have no hesitation to say that the real comprehension of Whitman has only started to-day. Whitman himself will say, I fancy, that he knew that for anything good there was no hurry, and the showy vain materialism will pass away, and that, therefore, he sung into a long future which will be as deep a certainty as the past.

I dare say that under the democratic clothes, people of any country of the world hide undemocratic minds; they should like to press the others with the word democracy if it was convenient to themselves, and they would not mind acting undemocratically, when they are commanded by their own selfish wills. Of course I am not wholly blind to the material influence of democracy that we have seen already, but I grieve to observe that the democratic spirit does not

penetrate into people's minds through the countries as we wish it to do. Putting aside democratism seen from the social and political aspects, I should like to dwell on how far the literary efforts of democratism or Whitmanism are understood in America.

The American literature of the future (of the present also) will neither be classic nor romantic, materialism nor mere spiritualism. It will have nothing to do with an irresponsible imagination or traditional formalism; being apart from any monasticism or ecclesiasticism, the American literature must live close to the ground, feeling her impassioned rhythmic vibration in its inner heart. Perhaps Whitman had fallen, in spite of himself, into a bathos of optimism from following the idealism of the past too reminiscentially. What I should like to ask America is how she will continue the work Whitman started or left unfinished.

The American emotion encouraged by the great healthy bodies that developed fitting for the greatness of the American continent, found a sudden outlet politically or militantly recently; but I am sure I would not know anything more dangerous than the emotion handled by proud, conscienceless unreflective egoists, because only the emotion arranged by free-born vision can be natural and keep our strength at once modest and uncompromising. Admitting that pride and self-confidence are to be justified, I should say that we human beings must be natural; when we are natural, we can be suggestive; again when we are suggestive, there is possibility for the future. Possibility for the future is a prophecy itself. I myself pay great respect to the emotional element of the Americans; but I know that, when their emotion inclines materialistically or even intellectually, it is the time when they act selfishly and consciencelessly; again

it is the time when true freedom is somewhat impaired. I should like to ask the Americans how natural are they to-day. Are they modest to the others?—Can they arrange their emotion proportionally? Shortly, are they still faithful to the Declaration of Independence, Abraham Lincoln and Whitman?

OPEN LETTER TO THE CALIFORNIANS

Dear Californians :—

The original civilisation of California was an outburst of flowers from the seeds thrown by the sacred hands of the pioneers, who, to use Miller's words, "housed with God upon the height, companioned with the peak, and the pine;" it was the civilisation of honest labour that broke off the social crust of life, traditional, apt for degeneration, into a life newer and more hopeful. It was the mighty privilege of California to build an Empire with honest labour that was the only key to open the world called the future. Labour rises to its great worth, when it opens, many thanks for it as a key, the new meaning of liberty, respect of the so-called social solidarity. In truth, California in the early age

was the Promised Land. Let us praise the pioneers with Miller who sung :

“ Each man a hero, lion each !
Behold what length of limb, what
length
Of life, of love, what daring reach
To deep-hived honeycomb ! What
strength !
Clean out-door Adams, virile, clean
As nature in her vernal green ;
He hears, hears as a prophet hears
The morning music of the spheres.”

Civilisation built with labour, unlike that created with mere intellect or wisdom, is, of course, more brave, more manly, more cheerful, in one word, more human ; when your Californian civilisation, that is to say, the civilisation of labour, became very well developed, its emotional aspect was wonderful. It was never shrivelled and cramped in na-

ture, it was so natural. I think that such a civilisation as you created in old days can be called lyrical. I was glad to notice at least in the early age that, while labour itself was a material question, it never became in your California a sad prey of materialism which is to be interpreted to-day as socialism hardened by positivism. Therefore the labour question in California was not so dry and inhuman as in any other country of Europe; when it was becoming even anarchism in the other countries, in California it kept its own human aspect. And again, when the labour question of Europe was going to be separated from the points of liberty and true individualism, this question in California was quite free till recently from such a danger. That was mainly, I think, from the reason of the great natural wealth with which the country was blessed; beside, there was history that the principles of honest labour were laid by the

pioneers under whose shadow the labourers of your country managed to keep their own lyrical moods. But alas, that is now the past history!

California cannot be different after all from the other countries where the philistines attempt to encroach on people with their money and politics, and people lose their valuable principle and emotion from becoming familiarised with those dangerous poisons. When the sacredness of labour was compact in the early time, that was from the reason, I think, that the real provincial aspect of your Californian civilisation was well protected against the destroyers. The provincialism of civilisation in its true meaning is highly valuable; it is a fact that any real civilisation should have a provincial aspect. And like literature, civilisation too grows in provincialism. Alas, you Californians lost now this manly brave civilisation

which was human ! Miller sung about the builders of this human civilisation with the following words :

“ Not Roberts, he of Candahar,
Not Cronje with his scar-seamed men,
Not any man of noisy war,
Nor boastful man with blood-dipt
pen !—
No, no, the hero of the strife
Is he who deals not death, but life :—
I count this man the coming man,
The rounding glory of God’s plan.”

We Japanse were thankful for this civilisation of old California where, above all, the sacredness of manual labour was taught. We who had been brought up in the atmosphere in which the class system was supposed to be a safety-valve of society, and to break it a treason, felt, coming to California, such a strange, most invigorating sensation from the

American liberty and equality that generated the principle "Labour is Sacred." How glad we were here to learn how to liberate our own minds, and to be baptised in the true sense of democracy.

It is now almost twenty years since I went round through your California as a tramp, carrying a blanket and razor (my mustache was beginning to grow then),—now under evergreen shades of cedars and sequoias, then in the burning sands of the flat valley; I cannot forget how kindly I was treated by the village people who were building life with honest labour. If your Californian civilisation is not a human sympathetic kind, it is nothing; again if it is not lyrical to feel the true passionate pulse of Heaven and Earth, it is nothing. In truth, its being provincial is its own great value. The civilisation of your California, if it is as I wish, will become surely a suggestion to the other

civilisations of the world which is hastening to become inhuman, emotionless and cruel.

But time had been changed in California. The glorious story of the giant builders in olden days passed away. Is California, this Promised Land of fifty years ago, becoming like any other country where idealism turns to senseless sod? Are you, dear Californians, faithful to your original civilisation which you created with your honest human hands? Oh, where is your sympathy with honest labour? Again where is your old belief in freedom and equality? Where is your fair play?

TO THE AMERICANS

Your romanticism inherited from the pure proud English blood (your ancestors crossed the Atlantic more from romantic impulse than from deliberate calculation, I think) usually innocent, healthy, fostered by geographical insularity, has made you, at least in the past, the incarnation of complacency. When you have misused your optimism, the natural outgrowth of your wealthy resources in substance or spirit, sometimes you have fallen—indeed an extremely engaging and winning sort of degeneration at that—into the assumption of an air of patronage; often you are dreamers, perhaps not very deep, at the same time propagandist perhaps over self-confident. However, it is wonderful to see that you have never, under any circum-

stances, become a prey to selfish dissipation. And again it is wonderful to see with what a grand manner you walk in the life of contradiction you have wilfully created. The best example of your men, to select only one from the poets (what country has more poets than your America?), I see in Walt Whitman, that extraordinary personage of contradiction, that interesting mixture of dreamer and propagandist, who once sang :

“ I will make the Continent indissolute,
I will make the most splendid race the sun
ever shone upon,

I will make divine magnetic lands, with
the love of comrades, with the life-long love
of comrades.”

Emerson, too, might be a man of Whitman's category, representing Holmes's Bostonians who believed that “the Boston State-House was the hub of the solar system.”

This sort of optimism or romanticism,

whether in the garb of holiday-making Topsy-turvydom or in the dark robe of a theologian's dignity, is not merely a simple admiration of your own self and country. I would not call it a lyrical mood, for there is distinctly some epical superstition running through it. (Where is another country, so epic as yours?) I may be wrong to regard your optimism as a superstition, because in so many cases, it has grown under the stimulus of the holy light of realised fact, into a magnificent faith. Like all men of faith you, too, are impulsive. Again let me say that you are never a lyrical nation. A lyrical people are often irresponsible, pleased to misunderstand themselves; an impulsive nation like yours rushes into taking another's responsibility on her own shoulders, and being given even a superficial reason, will not hesitate to pay its bill and feel happy. Such an act, even though theoretically un-

wise, is certainly praiseworthy ; its weakness is so suggestive. When we Japanese hesitate and are obliged even to act shabbily, since our wings of lyrical mood have been impeded, we cannot help attributing it to the incompleteness or poverty of situation on which we are standing. But you should be thankful for the superstition or faith of optimism that makes you strong, fearless and even foolish. Again be thankful for being able to act foolishness. When you think that you are the best nation of the world, you are assuming an attitude psychologically the same as that of a wealthy heir to whom life's pain and doubt are unknown. How I envy you that you have not been, at least till to-day, so unfortunate as to learn from bitter experience life's reality.

It was Thackeray who understood the word complacency as a master-characteristic of ignorance. When I myself use it, it is not,

of course, in any fit of ill humour, but from my desire to reveal the really fortunate fact, that you have found it hardly necessary to study the geography of the rest of the world. In other words, you have found the whole universe in your own selves, although you may not be so narrow-minded to-day as Thoreau, who discovered all the phenomena of the Arctic regions only in Concord. But where are the people who travel so extensively as you? And again where are the people who return home, like you, without a knowledge of the country or countries where they have travelled? I should say that you go into other countries carrying your own library, dining room and parlour, even with a big stove for your winter use, and when you return home, you carry them back; the chief joy of travelling for you, I dare say, is to find your own America in the other country, I mean, how your civilisation is

invading there. It is not only my own opinion that your unreceptive mind (of course I admire its majestic manner almost dominating its environment) will be ever a stranger to the other country's reality. You may not know, on the other hand, how the money you spend so freely—quite natural to you as a wealthy heir—is demoralising a country, for instance, like Japan, whose physical desire is only checked by her unnatural cold asceticism. I heard at Honolulu, in 1885, that an "American tip" (and some American missionaries), had corrupted the whole islands. I heard in London, in 1912, that the "American tip" (and American journalism) had also corrupted England. And I am observing here at Tokyo to-day that this "American tip" (and American chewing gums and moving pictures) is working a speedy corruption on Japanese mind.

I depend on your magnanimity in express-

ing this candid opinion of mine, believing that it is one of your splendid characteristics. Indeed, I myself have seen many occasions when you diffused that blessing of magnanimity with silent but dignified sense of humour. Again this sense of humour is another of your fine qualities. What a grand manner of yours is that, just like the manner of an elephant whose little eyes beam in humour mingled with sagacity. But I confess that my belief, particularly in this point, became disturbed when I heard from my friend just returned from your country that, since the present war had invited you in (allow me to use this expression), the time-honoured freedom of speech had been greatly impaired. I take it, however, as a proof of your main natute rather impulsive than deliberative.

To return to your ignorance of the geography of other countries. How we tried, I remember, at the time of the China-Japan

war, to point out to you the difference between Japan and China. Again we were obliged at the time of the Russia-Japan war, when in your country, to mark out our small islands from the world's map. To-day I am wondering what knowledge of Japan and the Japanese you have gained from your long contact (this long contact perhaps, as somebody remarks, was only between the governments of Washington and Tokyo), when my Japanese correspondent in your country often informs of your almost appalling ignorance of our country. The Bostonians were right in the belief that they were holding the golden hub of the world. It is nothing but a fact that it is unnecessary for you to come out into the other countries since the other countries come to you, as if ants swarming round a big lump of sugar; from Europe and Asia, and from every corner of the world, all the people ambitious and young wish to step into your

rich domain. Who will blame you if you feel superior to those poorly dressed immigrants? That you have grown to be innocent optimists is certainly excusable even as a fault. What I admire is to see how lightly you carry this optimism, and with what dignity.

Perhaps you will be displeased when I say that your American civilisation is tinted with a certain provincialism ; I mean it in the real and pure sense, because the true essence of provincialism protects you from the degeneration in which your individual personality would lose its royal colour. The *American Scholar* delivered by Emerson as his Phi Beta Kappa address at Harvard in 1837 (perhaps a veritable Independent-Day bell for American scholarship as some critic gladly remarked) should be taken on the light of an exposition of your provincialism ; again the European fame of Whitman rests on his

universal idealism touched to distinction by his provincialism. The fact that Bret Harte and Henry James lived and died in England should be regarded as a sort of return compliment from your America to her mother-country. What would be left of Mark Twain if his provincialism were taken out? And I think that the true merits of Howells lie more or less in his parochial manifestation. I do not see why San Francisco should be the same as Paris, although I have often heard some people, evidently Californians, talking about them in the one same breath; surely there is no wisdom in the attempt to confound the human nature in Chicago with that of Manchester. If your valiant standard-bearers of new poetry, carelessly called the free-verse writers, go beyond their endorsement of the new European movement with their enthusiastic provincialism, it means that they are acting blasphemy against their

precious birth-right. I believe that the future of your American literature is vast, because, let me say perhaps at the risk of your displeasure, dilettantism there reigns in its real meaning; I should like to know where is a more sad literature than that written by the so-called professional writers? It is a general rule that the real life of authors declines with the passing-away of dilettantism into sad professionalism. Not only in literature, but in every phase of life, your greatness hangs on that one word. It is plain enough to see how your dilettantism works a divine deliverance for the international politics of the world.

I read somewhere as Münsterberg's words that the American education is given into the untrained rough hands of the lowest bidder. It is true that your women even with their brains much injured or weakened by magazine-reading and candy-eating, con-

trol the larger part of your educational field, perhaps driving the men away like Bret Harte's heathen Chinese with their cheap labour; still I believe that your educational condition is ten-times better than that of Japan where only tired, spiritless men (the strong-bodied, strong-souled young Japanese, in truth, cultivate their own lives somewhere else) are used to find their safe shelters. For some time past the teachers of Japanese schools, high or low, have been turning to mere phonographs of foreign languages, diffusing other people's ideas, but never their own, of course, naturally enough, for minds wholly subjugated by Western civilisation. Sorry to say I am also one of these sad specimen. There are, I believe, many faults in your educational system with those half-paid women, one of which would be certainly that it encourages the feminine sort of civilisation (indeed America's is a civilisation

feminine and in some sense the highest) and instils the religion of woman-worship, into a tender brain ; however, I am not blind to the fact that it was, in a great measure, the very work of American women, generally speaking, that successfully checked the vulgarisation of the country in the hands of men with only monetary aspiration, almost without time for reflection and culture.

I should like to know where is a country where some sort of woman-worship is not practised. The Englishmen worship their women as they do liberty, which some critic calls lockjaw. The Germans worship the women with the cold estimation they have for kitchen utensils which, like German patriotism, are not a luxury but a necessity for existence. And the Frenchmen and Japanese worship the women with a lyrical mood so that to pretend to be brutes to them would be a sign of their courtesy. But none of

them, as it seems to me, worship their women with a faith of religion like yourselves; it is interesting to study how this religion, the "Woman-worship," was first inaugurated in America, and how as a useful practice it was respected there. But to-day, as a religion, it has lost its original meaning of existence, sadly degenerating into nothing more than mere habit, perhaps like drinking or smoking or even opium-smoking, from which you will never succeed to keep yourself away. It is really sometimes a pretty habit, this woman-worship, even when it has none of its former religious dignity, but as with any habit, you will soon become or have already become, dull, senseless and numbed from long contact with it. Perhaps you may not see anything wrong or faulty about it, when, as in truth, this women-worship as a habit or as a religion if you like, is publicly endorsed and greatly encouraged by your journalism,

yellow or white or whatever it be. (Where is a country where the papers have such an influence as in yours?) To judge from the face of the papers, your New York is decidedly a great woman-worshipper. Your Chicago is never below New York in this religion. And San Francisco, too, burns incense before its sacred altar; there is, I think, some psychological reason for her becoming a far fiercer woman-worshipper perhaps than any other Eastern city. Of course I am not in the position to advise you to examine your women through the naked eyes of reality, or to put your religion upon a high shelf only to admire it as a precious relic of olden time. But here is your idealism, ignorant of life's pain, innocent and simple, which will surely object to leaving the woman-worship behind. Besides, without it, your female civilisation is soulless, a mere empty shrine from which the golden idol has

been stolen. But I am wondering at the present wonderful time when you have stepped into the war (again from your romantic impulse rather than from deliberate calculation) what actual effect this step will have on yourself. Will your civilisation become man-like? If so, it will do you good certainly. The careless extravagant mind of your female civilisation is bound to grow sober, grave and thoughtful, when the war puts its hand at once on the rearrangement of your own strength. Will your optimism ever become solemn? If so, again it will do you good doubtless. This is the time when you should take off your optimism's powder and paint and become real to steer a wise course amid the grave, confused moral questions. Shortly, this is the time when your optimism needs to be aroused to consciousness of itself. You have to learn the real proposition from the other world.

There was a time in America, for instance, in the early days when you had to struggle against the ever-combative nature and Indians; to be optimistic or even to pretend to be so at such a time, was surely considered a part most courageous, and the play of optimism was the best and most sensible self-protection from moral degeneration. But if I say that your real trouble lies in nothing but your optimism, as I said before, nourished and encouraged by the wealthy resources of your country (and, backed by your hasty belief in humanity and also by your newspapers), I mean that it is a menace, from the reason of its being superficial and slight, to the real development of morality. Indeed, it has acted always, I should say, to weaken your sense of life's conscience and force; I am sure that only when optimism stands on life's inevitable realism, its true value will be revealed. The present war is a great test

for your optimism. Will it awaken you to a consciousness of your real selves ?

Let me say again that your American civilisation is feminine, although I do not mean that it is weak or epicurean. From the reason that your country is floating comfortably on the ocean all by itself, as if a wellfed real or lazy iceberg, though you are not, like Japan, situated at the end of the world, this side of nowhere, your civilisation has had but little to do with the world's development till recently. At the outset of the present article, I spoke on your romanticism, well harmonising with your feminine civilisation ; as long as your impulsive nature of passion is kept compact, it is natural for you to be unreal and unscientific. I am sure that this definition in calling you unscientific may be criticised and even denied by one who pleases to understand you through the physical phenomena which are on the main

your men's creation. But it is my own opinion that your material advancement, probably with little mutual understanding, lives with your spiritually feminine civilisation (highest but weak, till it is tested by diversity and misfortune) under the one same roof, and that makes you a thing of contradiction or incongruity. I do not know any other country where material wealth looks so wonderful and even mysterious when those different two things are mingled together by its powerful breath. Indeed, the most amazing thing with you is that your contradiction, in nine cases out of ten, looks quite natural and even comfortable. But to say that your spiritual civilisation and material advancement do not well harmonise, means after all that between your men and women there is very little understanding. For this matter of understanding between men and women, England, for instance, is far more fortunate. The fact

that you have more divorce cases and many more unmarried men and women than any other country would attest the truth of my assertion in some measure. I will not be far from the truth if I say that the eyes of your men and women are turned on entirely opposite directions; but if they reach the same place as they do reach strangely and surely, that will be nothing but nervous debility.

Your women grow to suffer from it, because their impulsive lives of passion are never fulfilled; and your men will get it as the result of their endless work, always illogical, often absurd, from which as from an octopus, they cannot make themselves free. Their love of work so conclusive and almost terrible, is a sure sign of their being victims of chronic disease; if they suddenly stop working, they will perhaps find themselves hopelessly crippled and useless for the rest of their lives, an opium smoker who has suddenly stopped

smoking. You will see why I say that the working habit of your men is one of your greatest national problems; in truth, it is a great social problem of your country in the same sense that the lazy life of your women is certainly a menace to the sound health of your country. But your men and women, I dare say, fail to understand what is the real meaning of life; this being the case, there is no time so critical and important for them as to-day.

I have often heard and still am hearing that your wealthy daughters were under the allurements or decoys of European lords or marquises. But the trouble is that the good-hearted mothers of these daughters are always fallen into such a profound admiration of those aristocrats of Europe who possess nothing but rosy delicate figures or beautifully trimmed moustaches. Before those mothers your newspapers are of course

mighty eulogists of them. Besides, I think that your fair daughters are far too civilised and, of course, too educated for your own men. Who patronise the art of your country? Your women. Who support your stages? Your women. And who control your literature? Your women. I used to hear, fifteen or twenty years ago, that your women could not keep away from Omar of Persia and chicken salads. They might be to-day cringing round Tagore of India and Chinese vases of jade. So long as things look and sound exotic and mysterious, your women are content with them.

Let me say again that your men are in the same sense hardly equal to your women spiritually. Your men whose culture is sometimes doubtful, are not conversationalists, though they might become monologists or preachers. As I said, they are not conversationalists in the true meaning; and that

is the reason why they fail to become successful lovers in women's eyes. If they fail, as they do in fact, I think and say that it is the fault of their environment and education.

I hope that you will excuse me if I have spoken too honestly and truthfully. If I have not dwelt much on your strong points, it is from my belief that it was unnecessary to speak about them to you whose future is so vast and meaningful.

JAPANESE POETS AND POETRY

I often wonder at the difference between the words of English poets and the daily speech of common people; and I think that it is not necessary to go to Milton or Dryden for the proof. The poetical words used by Tennyson, Browning, Francis Thompson, and even Yeats, are certainly different from those spoken in the London streets or an English village shadowed by a church spire or darkened by dense foliage. But, on the other hand, how similar are the words of Japanese poets and those of the common people! Is it that the Japanese poets, whether they be Uta poets or Hokku writers, are condescending to the common people? Or is it that the common people of Japan are entering into the realm of poesy? Or

is it that our Japanese phraseology belongs to either of them, or does not belong to either of them, through its virtue of being neutral in nature?

Suppose a pensive young lady is standing by a veranda opened to the garden with blooming cherry trees, and her eyes are following the snow-white petals of cherry blossoms hastening to the ground. And suppose she murmurs with a sigh, "Why do the flowers fall in such a flurry?" Now compare such an exclamation with the following Uta poem by Ki no Tomonori:

'Tis the spring day
With lovely far-away light . . .
Why must the flowers fall
With hearts unquiet?

It is plain to see how the words of Japanese poets and common people join hands. This particular point is most worthy of notice

in the discussion of the differences and similarities between the East and West in literature.

It is said in the West that the poets are a race apart. The fact that our Japanese poets are not a race apart should be the very focus for a discussion of Japanese poets. While in the West the poets claim special regard and, indeed, immortality for themselves, we in Japan treat the poet as a natural phenomenon, as natural as a flower or bird.

I admit that we Japanese as poets are lacking in creative power, and do not aim, like many Western poets, at becoming rebuilders of life. We are taught not to deal with poetry as a mere art, but to look upon it as the most necessary principle along which our real life shall be developed. When we kneel before poetry, it is our desire to create a clarified pure realm where we can, through the inspiration of rhythm, arrange our own

minds. And then we recognise the existence of the compromising ground of passion, where we as members of society found our safety. What great uncompromising creators of passion were Shelley, Byron, Browning, and Swinburne! They were so earnest in their desire for the recreation of life, and not afraid were they, when their desire reached its climax, even to risk reaching a condition of confused intricacy. They were indeed great and wonderful heroes. We cannot help thinking, on the other hand, what cowards the majority of Japanese poets have been.

I respect that attitude of Western poets in wishing to rebuild or recreate their own lives; and also I can well understand why they ascribe importance to their intellectual power. A great literary danger lies in this, of course, because there is nothing more sad and terrible for poets than to enslave themselves to intellect.

But we have also our own literary danger. I mean that we often mistake a simple and cold morality for an art. I should like to know what is a more dangerous thing for poets than this sad morality. There are only a few Japanese poets who have failed from their abuse of moods and passions; but we know so many cases wherein their poetical failure was quite complete under the stifling breath of conventional morality. This damage would not necessarily be below that inflicted by intellect; it might be greater. We notice that the Western poets often attempt to discover a poetical theory even in the waving plaits of Apollo's robe and analyse intellectually a little cloud flying in the sky. Admitting that their poetical theory and intellectual power are doubtless great, I have no hesitation in declaring that it is they who harden, shrink, and wither their own art. It is true to say that they owe much

to the matter of form for the great development of their epics and dramas. Also it is true that the undeveloped form of Japanese poetry has given a mighty freedom for our poets to fly into an invisible spiritual domain. We can say again that, if these poets both of the West and the East often stray into the field of non-poetry, it is the result of their too close attachment to forms.

Of course we want more passion and intellect in our Japanese poets, and also properly tempered patience and effort. And at the same time we should hope that the Western poets would forget their passion and intellect to advantage and enter into the real poetical life born out of awakening from madness. I have no quarrel with a critic when he applies the word "mad" to his Western poets; but we Japanese would be pleased to see and admire the rare moment when madness grows strangely calm and re-

turns to its normal condition, and there we will find our own real poetry. Not the moving dynamic aspect of all the phenomena, but their settled still aspect inspired the Japanese poets—at least the Japanese poets of olden days—to real poetry. But I know that the times are changing when we must, I think, cultivate the really living dynamic life. And I am afraid, with many others, that such a new literary step may bring us into an unhappy compromise with Western literature. Of course there are poets and writers both East and West who know only how to compromise. But, on the other hand, we have a natural-born Easterner, for instance, Wordsworth, in the West, and there may be a natural-born Westerner in the East, who will bring the East and West together into true understanding, not through faint-hearted compromise but by the real strength of independence which alone knows the mean-

ing of harmony.

To-day we must readjust the meanings of all things or give a new interpretation to all the old meanings; and we must solve the problem of life and the world from our real obedience to laws and knowledge that will make the inevitable turn to a living song, and learn the true meaning of time from the evanescence of psychical life; then our human lives will become true and living.

We must realise the ephemeral aspect of moments when time moves, and also the still aspect of infinity when it settles down; seek the meaning of moments out of the bosom of infinity, and again that of infinity from the changing heart of moments—that is the secret of real poetry. The moments that suggest the still aspect of infinity are accidental, therefore living; again the infinity that is nothing but another revelation of moments is absolute, therefore quiet and ful

of strength and truth. The real poetry should be accidental and also absolute. See the river and mountains and trees, see the smiling garden flowers, see the breaking clouds of the sky. See also the lonely moon walking a precipitate pathless way through the clouds. The natural phenomena are, under any circumstances, revealing both meanings of the accidentalism which is born from the absolute. When our great poets of Japan write only of a shiver of a tree or a flower, of a single isolated aspect of nature, that means that they are singing of infinity from its accidental revelation.

The poetical attitude of Wordsworth was anarchical when, singing of the small celandine, daisy, and daffodils, he gave even a little natural phenomenon a great sense of dignity by making it a center of the universe, and broke the stupid sense of proportion by looking on things without discrimination; he

was pantheistic, like nearly all Japanese poets and painters, because he was never troubled by any intellectual differentiation, and his clear and guileless eyes went straight into the simplicity that joined the universe and himself into one. His poetical sensibility was very true and plain, and he gained a real sense of the depth of space, the amplitude of time, and the circle of the universal law, and made his life's exigency a new turn of rhythm. I am glad to think of Wordsworth as the first Easterner of English literature.

I do not know what one critic means when he calls Robert Bridges the father of the new poetry, unless he means that Bridges has regained the artless bent of the poetical mind which was lost under the physical vulgarization of the Mid-Victorian age, and that he has opened his honest eyes upon nature and life. He, like our Japanese Uta

or Hokku poets, gazes on life's essential aspects. If the Japanese poets teach the Western poets anything, it is how to return to the most important feature of poetry after clearing away all the débris of literature; their expression is simple, therefore mysterious in many respects; as it is mysterious, it is vivid and fresh. There is nothing more wonderful than the phrase "Seeing poetry exactly;" nobody who has never lived in poetry fully, claims to see its exact existence. And you cannot be taught how to live in it by reason or argument; you must have a sense of adoration that comes only from poetical concentration.

The time is coming when, as with international politics where the understanding of the East with the West is already an unmistakable fact, the poetries of these two different worlds will approach one another and exchange their cordial greetings. If I

am not mistaken, the writers of free verse and the so-called imagists of the West will be ambassadors to us.

POSTSCRIPT

America is the most wonderful, even miraculous country developed on the emotion that is rich enough not to fear to fall into sentimentalism ; and when she happens to fall into sentimentalism, her idealism, that great aspect of her nature, always rescued her from spiritual degeneration. To call America the Land of Emotion has more true meaning than the land of liberty, because her emotionalism makes her see clearly and simply the mighty truth of the time and act accordingly, while her conception of liberty drives herself sometimes into a muddled unitarianism or dangerous compromise. It was through this fire of emotion that America entered with such a faith into the late world war. And as the matter concerned Japan ,

it was more through her emotionalism than anything else that she sided with us when we fought with China and Russia. I myself remember as if a matter of yesterday how the Americans rejoiced in each triumph of Japan against Russia in the Manchurian battle field; their emotional action was then perhaps more than of Japan who was the actual fighter. And it was, through her emotionalism that America sent us Commodore Perry under whose beacon light the late Emperor Meiji had written in 1867 his famous "Charter Oath," the last article of which being that we should seek in all parts of the world after wisdom and knowledge; the phrase, "all parts of the world," meant sometimes for Japan America herself.

When we talk even to-day on Townsend Harris, William E. Griffis, T. C. Hepburn and several other Americans with such an affection, we are so deeply grateful for the

heaven-blessed Americanism they carried on their broad shoulders, whose democratic humanitarianism (or human democratism) guided us safely into golden enlightenment; we cannot, in truth, find a proper word to express our heartfelt thankfulness toward America whose real work in Japan as an inspirer was unparalleled. Although we owe much to John Stuart Mill, Herbert Spencer, Henry Thomas Buckle and many other British authors, we can say that we owe still more to the American books, not to mention their particular names, which had been used in Japan as text-books in our thousand schools. How we enkindled in our minds a desire for liberty and idealism from the American history. I myself entertain a sweet memory of Peter Parley's History of the World whose author is no other than Nathaniel Hawthorne; I cannot forget how delighted I was in reading it by my school window. Let me

tell you that Longfellow's Psalm of Life was almost the first English poem ever translated into Japanese; how we young boys recited now thirty years ago the following stanzas :

“ Art is long, and Time is fleeting,
And our hearts, though stout and
brave,
Still, like muffled drums, are beating
Funeral marches to the grave.
In the world's broad field of battle,
In the bivouac of Life,
Be not like dumb, driven cattle!
Be a hero in the strife ! ”

Thus young Japan awakened by the sudden knocking of America, had been growing under her mother-like tender watch where, just like a true motherly heart, sentimentalism and idealism were entwined spontaneously; when Japan ever acted any praiseworthy deed in past to please the sentimental ide-

alistic heart of America, how we Japanese had been praised and even glorified by her generous words. But we soon entered the age of adolescence, when, while our loyalty to her not being changed, we sometimes found ourselves to have our own individualistic way and displease her motherly heart. We confess that we had been stubborn and even wrong sometimes ; but let me venture to say that America's insistence physical or spiritual had been, as it seemed to us, often sectarian and frequently audacious. We are not here to defend ourselves, and censuring of her conduct is far from our desire ; what we wish to express is the fact that we still, as in the past, dearly cherish the sweet memory of her generosity and tender care she had given us when we were young, and again as in olden days our love and loyalty toward her are never changed. And I firmly believe that our two hearts that once truly and deeply

loved each other will never become the two hearts cruel and cold forever, or that the dissatisfaction we sometimes entertain will certainly insure the truer and far intense love in future.

We are glad to see that, as it is natural to her sentimental idealistic motherly heart whose work of life shall never end, America found an object in China, perhaps as with Japan in olden days, on whom she can shower her tender care of protection. We Japanese has no feeling of jealousy, but only hope that China will find her own way by the beacon light that America will throw upon her darkness. Perhaps Japan too might be given some opportunity to serve on this work of gods and righteousness.

Now assuming that Japan is now a fully grown country, we send to America as the strong muscular country the following salutation :

“ Hear the stars sing to the stars,
Hear the true hearts speak to the true
hearts !

There’s no south, there’s no north,
When brave men meet together.
Let the East greet the West !
There’s a pledge of love,
When true men sing together.

We are the men of life, not death ;
We deal daylight and fight,
Not darkness nor tears.
Our hearts sing the song of morning sun.
Our footsteps are on the road of light.
Give a cheer,—
There’s one world of battle for truth,
When strong men meet together.

We hold by arms the ocean of oceans,
We two guard the world in the East
and the West ;
We hear the same song of the same stars,

The same prayer we speak unto the
 same sky,
The same sea of Fate we sail through.
Here the true men meet together,—
Let the East greet the West ! ”

Criticisms of Mr. Noguchi's Works

I find atmosphere, and charm, and colour, and naïveté, and the true touch of the poet.—WILLIAM SHARP.

Your poems are another instance of the energy, mysteriousness, and poetical feeling of the Japanese, from whom we are receiving much instruction.—GEORGE MEREDITH.

They are full of a rich sense of beauty, and of ideal sentiment. In fact, the essential excellence of the poems and the particular quality of their excellence surprise me.—WILLIAM M. ROSSETTI.

Criticism, in the usual sense, seems a cumbrously concrete form of appreciation of such rainbow tints and perfumed whispers as make, for the most part, Mr. Noguchi's poems. A vivid Autumn leaf carried on the wind, a handful of rose petals, "a straying moonbeam"—for these we need equally delicate exclamations—exclamations which have an added charm of naïveté from being made in a language which he still writes, I am glad to say, with a Japanese accent. I hope he will never lose that —RICHARD LE GALLIENNE in *The New York Times*.

If the adoption of Western civilisation by Japan has in many, or any, more cases than the present the effect of making a Japanese poet write in English, Europe can only have the greater occasion for congratulation. This book ("From the Eastern Sea") is a small one, and has nothing in it to which there does not attach a certain strangeness of poetical art which must surprise every one, perplex some, and, no doubt, repel

many. But there is nothing in the book that is not English poetry, and that of a new kind. Its pieces are vague, ethereal lyrics about love, the beauty of women, the seasons, the poet's art, and the moonshine. Their metrical management has a delicacy, their imagery a fine quality of colour (and also what, for want of a better description, may be called a charming queerness) analogous to those seen in Japanese pictorial art; while in one poem there is something that sounds like a reminiscence of Poe . . . The novelty and the genuine quality of the book will give it a high place in the estimation of every lover of poetry who looks into it.—*The Scotsman*.

But it is through his incoherences that we seem to see what is most significant in this scarcely to be apprehended personality, which goes, like Eastern music, right through harmony to what lies nearest silence on the other side . . . Mr. Noguchi is perhaps trying to render what can never be rendered, even with the best aid of words; but his brave attempt, in a language not his own, is full of interest.—*The Saturday Review*.

He is a poet whose flame has been so scrupulously tended as to flicker with the slightest breath. He is as many-mooded as the combinations between sunshine and shadow. His poetry actually is the thing that has induced a mood in him, trimmed of all that he had had to remove for himself, and so made into something between nature and that pure elevation of mind from which Noguchi feels. This quality of pure flame—like emotion—is common to all his poems, extraordinarily various as they are.—ARTHUR RANSOME in *The Fortnightly Review*.

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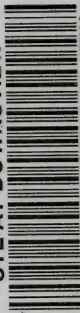
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